5 - 7 MARCH 2025

CHALLENGES AND THE FUTURE OF MINORITY AND INDIGENOUS RIGHTS PROTECTION CONFERENCE

STIRLING COURT HOTEL

CHALLENGES AND THE FUTURE OF MINORITY AND INDIGENOUS RIGHTS CONFERENCE

CONTENTS

5 - 7 MARCH 2025, STIRLING COURT HOTEL

If you have any questions, please email us at 'MIRP2025@stir.ac.uk'. Thank you!

Conference Objective

This conference will reflect on the rights of indigenous peoples and ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, and the need to fundamentally rethink and recommit to their protection.

Since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a number of international legal instruments have been established with the objective of protecting the rights of minorities and indigenous peoples. Notable instruments include the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, considered the foundation of many other related treaties and declarations which have followed them. Relevant treaties and declarations have also been established at the regional and national levels. They incorporate international principles while also taking into account the specific needs of the minority and indigenous populations within the regions for which they are intended to provide protection.

This in-person conference, spanning two and a half days, will provide an opportunity to assess the contributions and challenges that these various instruments and other forms of solutions have brought to bear on minority and indigenous communities, which they are designed to protect and provide redress for. A central aim is to foster inclusive dialogue among academics, practitioners, and members of these various communities, in order to enhance existing conversations in these areas and to explore emerging issues of importance to these communities.

We sincerely hope you find the Conference enriching and enlightening.

Warm regards,

Co-chairs

Dr Damian Etone (University of Stirling) and Regina Paulose (CNS)

The Conference Organising Committee

Dr Edit Frenyo (University of Stirling), Dr Linda Mensah (University of Stirling), Dr Judith Oloo (Robert Gordon University), Sagina Vadakal (CNS) and Emilia Vassiliades (University of Stirling)

A Note on Publication

We will welcome papers from the conference to be considered for publication in the inaugural edition of the University of Stirling Human Rights Journal.

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KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Professor Joshua Castellino

Joshua Castellino is Co-Executive Director of Minority Rights Group International and Professor of International & Comparative Law at University of Derby, UK. He founded the School of Law at Middlesex and served as its Dean until 2018, stepping down to take on the role at Minority Rights Group full-time while retaining his Chair until 2022. Joshua holds Visiting Professorships at the College of Europe, (Poland), Oxford University (UK), & the Irish Centre for Human Rights, (Republic of Ireland) and serves pro bono on governing boards of civil society organisations in Germany, Netherlands, UK, Sweden, Uganda and Hungary. He is the current Chair of the Board of Trustees of Privacy International UK and Door Tenant at 25 Bedford Row.

Joshua participated in the European Union China Diplomatic & Expert Dialogue on Human Rights (2002-2006) and was appointed Chair, by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights of the 8th Forum on Minority Issues (2015), an inter-governmental dialogue with civil society under the auspices of the United Nations Human Rights Council.

Professor Angela O'Hagan

Angela O'Hagan was most recently Professor of Equality and Public Policy at Glasgow Caledonian University where she created the current MSc in Human Rights and previously led the MSc in Citizenship and Human Rights. She was also Deputy Director of the WISE Centre for Economic Justice.

Her career encompasses leadership roles in the community and statutory sectors in Scotland, including as Director of Carers Scotland, and Head of Campaigns and Communications with Oxfam Scotland, after a period with the Equal Opportunities Commission.

Throughout her career Professor O'Hagan has focused on integrating equality and human rights analysis in public policy, policy analysis and service design. She has served on a number of advisory and project groups with successive Scottish Governments including currently as the independent chair of the Equality and Human Rights Budget Advisory Group, a member of the National Advisory Council on Women and Girls, and previously as a member of the Commission on Local Tax Reform.

Professor O'Hagan has an international profile, particularly in gender and human rights budgeting, and through membership of academic and civil society networks. In 2019, she was awarded the Jo Cox Award for Public Service and Activity Citizenship by the Political Studies Association.

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5 - 7 MARCH 2025
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DAY 1 PROGRAMME
5 MARCH 2025*

Registration	8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.
Keynote: Professor Joshua Castellino	9:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.
Session 1: Environment, Climate, Natural Resources and Indigenous Peoples Chair: Dr Narissa Ramsundar Ruona Qi (Duke University) Dr Austin Nwafor (University of West England, Bristol) Nelson Goodnews Ologhadien (University of Dundee) Dr Edzia Carvalho and Dr Petya Dragneva (University of Dundee) Dr Karolina Prażmowska-Marcinowska (University of Silesia)	9:30 a.m. - 10:55 a.m.
Coffee Break	10:55 a.m. - 11:10 a.m.
Session 2: Indigenous People, Minority Groups and Domestic Protections Chair: Dr Edit Frenyo Dr Soe Win (SUNY Brockport, the State University of New York) Haley Mason (University of Ottawa) Dr Judith Oloo (Robert Gordon University)	11:10 a.m. 12:35 p.m.
Lunch: Keynote Awring Shaways, Founder and Director KG Lobby Center. Lunch sponsored by KG Lobby Center.	12:35 p.m. - 1:25 p.m.
Session 3: Indigenous People: Recognition and Land Rights Chair: Dr Judith Oloo Lia O'Broin (Dublin City University) Dr Aristoteles Constantinides (University of Cyprus) Dr Rahul Desarda (Jindal Global Law School)	1:25 p.m. - 2:50 p.m.
Coffee Break	2:50 p.m. - 3:05 p.m.
Session 4: Minority and Indigenous Rights: International Tribunals, Norms and Interpretations: Dr Elisa Ruozzi (University of Turin) Dr Colin Luoma (Brunel University) Dr Andras L. Pap (Eötvös University) Prof. John Packer and Slava Balan (University of Ottawa)	3:05 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

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DAY 2 PROGRAMME
6 MARCH 2025*

Keynote: Professor Angela O'Hagan	9:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.
Session 5: Indigenous Rights, and Self-Determination Chair: Dr Edzia Carvalho Dr Maureen N. Eke (Central Michigan University; CNS) Awring Shaways (KG Lobby Center and CNS) Dr Lilia Arakelyan (East Carolina University) Dr Alessandro Bufalini (University of Tuscia)	9:30 a.m. - 10:50 a.m.
Coffee Break	10:50 a.m. - 11:05 a.m.
Session 6: Minority and Indigenous Rights: Language, Identity and Cultural Heritage Chair: Nelson Ologhadien Nerys Palmer (Norwegian Centre for Human Rights) Dr Erika De Vivo (UiT the Arctic University Norway) Iva Divkovic (Independent) Dr Deniz Arbet Nejbir (Mesopotamia Observatory of Justice)	11:05 a.m. 12:25 p.m.
Lunch: Keynote Can-Go Afar (Canada). Lunch sponsored by Can-Go Afar (Canada).	12:25 p.m. - 1:10 p.m.
Session 7: Indigenous Rights, Peace Agreements, and Post-Conflict Contexts Chair: James Joseph Dr Narissa Kashvi Ramsundar (Canterbury Christ Church University) Dr Piergiuseppe Parisi (University of York)	1:10 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Coffee Break	2:30 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.
Session 8: Minority and Indigenous Rights in the Modern Technological Era Chair: Dr Linda Mensah Dr Roberta Medda-Windischer and Dr Katharina Crepaz (Eurac Research - Institute for Minority Rights) Sahil Asiwal (University of Delhi) Theshaya Naidoo (University of KwaZulu Natal)	2:45 p.m. - 4:05 p.m.
Closing Round Table/Q&A	4:05 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Dinner: Keynote Davie Donaldson. Dinner sponsored by Progress in Dialogue (UK) and Nawken Assembly (Scotland).	6:30 p.m.

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DAY 3 PROGRAMME
7 MARCH 2025

Special Session: Land Rights Panel/Workshop
Location: University of Stirling, Pathfoot Building LT A96

Co-hosted by the Congress of Nations and States
Y Bhim Nie, CNS Convening Council (Rhade, Vietnam)
Somaya Selim, Deputy Director Secretariat CNS (Egypt)
Jebra Ram Muchahary, CNS Convening Council (Bodo, India)

Land rights, not commonly associated with human rights, plays a catalytic role in economic growth, social development, and poverty alleviation. Land rights are connected to substantial issues with large stakes such as food systems, inequality, conflict, and the climate crisis. For different communities around the world, the United Nations has recognized that there is significance to lands and territories that "goes far beyond their simple monetary or productive value."

In this session, participants will be introduced to the connections between land rights and human rights. The panel will feature speakers from different communities from around the world who will briefly discuss the challenges their communities face with regards to land rights and what they have done to alleviate the impact from these challenges.

9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

If you have any questions, please email us at 'MIRP2025@stir.ac.uk'. Thank you!

Speaker Biographies

Dr Deniz Arbet Nejbir

Deniz Arbet Nejbir is a Kurdish human rights activist and lawyer. He is employed as a Legal Adviser for Mesopotamia Observatory of Justice, in Geneva (Switzerland) since September 2018. He received a full scholarship from both Ruskin College, Oxford and the University of Warwick to pursue his undergraduate law degree. Prior to commencing his PhD at Queen's University, he obtained an advanced master's degree (LLM) in International and European Law with distinction from Vrije Universiteit Brussels, where he was awarded a full scholarship. He graduated from DEL funded PhD in December 2019, with very minor corrections. His PhD thesis entitled "The Treatment of the Kurds and the Kurdish Language by the Turkish State," generates a new theoretical approach to the examination of the suppression of the Kurds and Kurdish language in Turkey by providing unprecedented examination of Turkey's systematic Kurdish annihilation policy under international and European human rights law and minority law and international criminal law, namely crimes against humanity and cultural and linguistic genocide. His PhD thesis makes an original contribution to Kurdish studies on Turkey and it is such high quality that it was subsequently awarded a book contract by the prestigious publishing house Routledge. The book is due to be published in 2024.

Dr Lilia Arakelyan

Dr. Lilia Arakelyan currently serves on the faculty at East Carolina University. She is an American Political Science Association (APSA) 2022-2023 Congressional Fellow. Her research interests include post-Soviet/Russian foreign policy, ethnopolitical conflicts in Eurasia, and international security more broadly. She is the author of Russian Foreign Policy in Eurasia: National Interests and Regional Integration (Routledge, 2017).

Sahil Asiwal

The author, Sahil Asiwal, is a young research scholar from India who is currently pursuing a PhD in law from the Faculty of Law University of Delhi, New Delhi. He possesses a sharp intellect and a keen interest in the fields of international environmental law, tribal rights, Indigenous people, LGBTQ rights, and international relations. He has an impressive academic background from renowned institutions in India. The author also worked for the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, where he handled various projects. He has experience presenting research papers at international conferences and has also published a few papers. The author possesses a humble and simple personality. Currently he is working as a legal consultant at the national institute for transforming India, Aayog (former name Planning commission of India).

Slava (Veaceslav) Balan

Slava (Veaceslav) Balan is a human and minority rights researcher and practitioner, originally from Moldova, now settled in Canada. During the last 20+ years Slava worked with the United Nations in Moldova, UN Women in Ukraine, mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues, OSCE / ODIHR, Freedom House, Amnesty International Moldova. Slava authored a number of articles on the issues concerning minority rights and engaged in projects aiming to uphold minority rights. Slava holds Master's degree in Comparative Law from McGill University in Canada (2015), Master's degree in Comparative Constitutional Law from the Central European University (2002), and an equivalent of Bachelor in Law degree from the Moldova State University (2000). In present Slava finalizes his PhD in Law program at the University of Ottawa, under the guidance of Prof. John Packer, Director of the University of Ottawa Human Rights Research and Education Center. Slava's PhD project focuses on human rights-based approach (HRBA) to international, national and local development, policy and law-making. As of May 2023, Slava serves as the executive director of the International Commission of Jurists - Canada.

Dr Alessandro Bufalini

Alessandro Bufalini is an Associate Professor of International Law at the University of Tuscia (Viterbo, Italy). Previously, he was an Assistant Professor (2020–2022) and a Research Fellow (2017–2019) at the same university. Before joining the University of Tuscia, he was a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Milano-Bicocca (2014–2016). He holds a law degree (cum laude) from the University of Bologna and a PhD in International and European Union Law from the University of Macerata. Alessandro Bufalini has been teaching Public International Law since 2014 and International Criminal Justice since 2021. He also taught International and European Migration Law (2019–2023) and Global Governance of International Security (2020–2023). In recent years, he has been a Visiting Fellow at several prestigious institutions, including the Amsterdam Center for International Law, the Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Criminal Law in Freiburg, the Institute for Advanced Legal Studies in London, and the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law in Heidelberg. He has published numerous articles and essays in collected volumes and in leading Italian and international peer-reviewed journals, and he is the author of a book on the relationship between the UN Security Council and the International Criminal Court (I rapporti tra la Corte penale internazionale e il Consiglio di sicurezza, Napoli, 2018). His main research interests include international migration law and policy, the sources and the modes of individual responsibility in international criminal law, state responsibility and immunities, and the use of force in international law.

If you have any questions, please email us at 'MIRP2025@stir.ac.uk'. Thank you!

Dr Edzia Carvalho

Dr. Edzia Carvalho joined the University of Dundee as Lecturer in Politics in January 2013. She teaches and researches human rights and democratic politics. She has co-authored two monographs (Measuring Human Rights and Issues and Methods in Comparative Politics, 4th edition) with Prof. Todd Landman (University of Nottingham) published by Routledge and journal articles published in Parliamentary Affairs, The DANS Data Journal, SAGE Research Methods, and The International Journal of Children's Rights. She was Principal Investigator and is now a team member of the Qualitative Election Study of Britain, the world's first longitudinal qualitative election study. Her current work focuses on human rights and qualitative methods. Her most recent publication (in Research Methods in Human Rights: A Handbook, ed. by Andreassen, O'Brien and Sano, Edward Elgar, 2024) maps out the use of qualitative methods in human rights research. Dr. Carvalho is also involved in research projects that intersect AI and the Just Transition to a green economy and human rights. She has worked with the international NGO, FIDH, on its biennial progress report of the human rights protections by EU member states and with the Scottish Government on the Baseline Assessment of business and human rights in Scotland. Dr Carvalho has a PhD in Government and an MA in Human Rights, both from the University of Essex.

Dr Katharina Crepaz

Katharina Crepaz (PD PhD) is Senior Researcher at the Center for Autonomy Experience, Eurac Research, and Privatdozentin (Senior Lecturer with Habilitation) at the Chair for Social Determinants of Health, Technical University of Munich, Germany. Her research focuses on gender & diversity, minorities, social determinants of health, and diversity governance.

Dr Aristoteles Constantinides

Aristoteles Constantinides is Associate Professor of International Law and Human Rights at the Department of Law of the University of Cyprus. He received his PhD from Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece. He has held visiting positions at the Universities of Amsterdam, Vienna, Grenoble Alpes, McGill, Kaunas, and the Institute of International Relations in Paris. From 2014 to 2021, he was advisor to the President of the Republic of Cyprus in the talks for the settlement of the Cyprus problem. He is actively engaged with governmental and non-governmental actors in various law-making and other activities promoting human rights in Cyprus. His research interests and publications include international human rights law, with emphasis on the rights of vulnerable groups, the law of the United Nations, statehood and recognition, and international law in domestic courts. He has authored several papers on the rights of minorities. In 2017, he received the teaching excellence award of the University of Cyprus.

Dr Rahul Desarda

Rahul Desarda is an Assistant Lecturer at Jindal Global Law School and Assistant Director at Mahatma Gandhi Centre for Peace Studies, O.P. Jindal Global University, India. He completed his Master of Laws (LL.M.) in International Law from The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University. His professional experiences include working with former President of Costa Rica, Carlos Alvarado Quesada, on climate and nuclear disarmament initiatives and Dr. James Kraska of the United States Naval War College on drafting a new manual on the law of naval warfare. I also had the privilege of completing a judicial clerkship under Justice David Unterhalter of the Supreme Court of Appeal of South Africa.

Iva Divkovic

Iva Divkovic is a human rights activist and advocate for Macedonian minority rights, representing the Macedonian minority in Bulgaria as a delegate at the European Free Alliance Conference. A locally elected politician with a strong background in the public sector, she holds an LLM in International Commercial Law from UCL, has completed the Bar Training Course, and is on track to qualify as a barrister. Alongside her work as a paralegal, Iva is contributing as deputy manager to a major project preserving historical archives documenting the Macedonian struggle for self-determination. She combines her legal expertise with a deep passion for justice and safeguarding Indigenous and minority rights heritage.

Dr Erika De Vivo

Erika De Vivo is an early career researcher specialising in Sámi studies and cultural anthropology. She is currently a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions postdoctoral fellow at the University of Tromsø (Norway). Her MSCA focuses on Sámi people's experiences during colonial encounters. Resorting to a decolonial approach and inspired by critical museology and Indigenous studies, her project aims to bring to light the individual life stories of 6 women and 3 children photographed by two Italian anthropologists between 1879 and 1886. In 2023 she completed a 10-months post-doctoral fellowship at IASH the Institute for the Advanced Studies in the Humanities at the University of Edinburgh (UK).

If you have any questions, please email us at 'MIRP2025@stir.ac.uk'. Thank you!

Dr Petya Dragneva

Petya Dragneva is a lecturer in Politics and International Relations at the University of Dundee. Petya's research interests centre on aspects of global, regional and domestic environmental reform in the context of sustainable development and circular economy initiatives. In her PhD (University of Sheffield), Petya explored the links between European Union environmental, waste and cohesion policies, focusing on the importance of policy interactions and policy integration as essential determinants of implementation within the context of Europeanization dynamics. Her recent work revolves around the drivers, processes of change and ideational paradigms defining green transitions for humans and non-humans throughout the history of mankind. It explores the multifaceted concept of transition and scrutinizes its uniqueness under the critical challenges of the modern environmental and climate crises. Petya has dealt with those issues in her teaching too, including leading modules on Global Politics of Sustainability and Green Politics. Petya was involved in assessing major environmental and transport projects under national Environmental Operational Programmes with the Directorate-General 'Regional Policy' of the European Commission in Brussels. Prior to that she ran a number of EU regional cross-border projects in Eastern Europe. She volunteers for Friends of the Earth, Zero Waste Scotland and the European Movement.

Dr Maureen N. Eke

Dr. Maureen N. Eke, is a Professor of Comparative and World Literatures in the Department of English, Central Michigan University where she teaches courses in African Literature, African American literature, Post-colonial Literature and theory, World Literature, Women's Writing, Film and adaptation as well as Human Rights through literature and film. She has also taught courses on Trauma and Genocide. Her current research is on genocide, specifically, the Biafran genocide in Nigeria (1966-1970). She is also the founder of AHERO, a non-profit organization focusing on humanitarian and educational projects that empower women and youth, especially the girl child, in small communities in Africa.

Dr Colin Luoma

Colin Luoma is a Senior Lecturer in Law at Brunel University London. He researches and writes on topics relating to cultural rights, Indigenous Peoples' rights, transitional justice and environmental justice.

Haley Mason

Haley Mason is a PhD student at the University of Ottawa, specializing in Human Rights Law. Her dissertation is aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of legal frameworks to better support Indigenous children and families. A dedicated advocate for social justice, Haley's research strongly reflects her commitment to advancing human rights.

Dr Roberta Medda-Windischer

Roberta Medda-Windischer (LL.M, PhD), Research Group Leader for Equality and Diversity in Integrated Societies at Eurac Research Institute for Minority Rights (Italy), is an international lawyer specialised in minority issues, diversity management, human rights and minority protection. Roberta has worked for various international organisations, including CoE/ECtHR, UNHCR and OSCE/ODIHR.

Theshaya Naidoo

Theshaya is a PhD (Law) Candidate at the University of KwaZulu Natal, researching the implications of neurotechnology in the judicial process. She holds an LLM in Medical Law, an LLB (cum laude), and a Bachelor of Social Science (cum laude) majoring in law, criminology, and forensic sciences. With expertise spanning gender and emerging technologies—AI, neurotech, and cryptocurrency—her research seeks to address the ethical and legal challenges these innovations present.

Dr Austin Nwafor

Austin Nwafor is a Lecturer and active member of the Environmental Law and Sustainability Research Group (ELSRG) at Bristol Law School, University of West of England (UWE) Bristol, the UK. He earned a PhD from the University of Stirling, Scotland. He is a former Associate Professor at the University of Nigeria Nsukka from where he joined the Bristol Law School in October 2023. He has teaching and research interests in plastic pollution governance and international commercial law. He is currently working on a project investigating airborne plastics regulation in the UK. He has been awarded several prestigious fellowships including the International Ocean Institute Fellowship (IOI Canada) (2018) and the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) Blue Charter Fellowship (2020) and (2021) which was targeted at the study of marine plastics governance in Sub-Saharan Africa.

If you have any questions, please email us at 'MIRP2025@stir.ac.uk'. Thank you!

Lia O'Broin

Lia O'Broin is a final year PhD researcher in the School of Law and Government at Dublin City University in Ireland and a Taighde Éireann – Research Ireland Postgraduate Scholar. Her PhD explores international human rights law in contexts of legal pluralism, including a case study of the Kyrgyz Republic. She holds an LLM from Trinity College Dublin and a BCL from University College Dublin.

Nelson Goodnews Ologhadien

Nelson Goodnews Ologhadien is a final-year PhD. Candidate at the Centre for Energy, Petroleum, and Mineral Law and Policy (CEPMLP), School of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Law, University of Dundee, Scotland. His research focuses on the intersection of Indigenous Peoples' land rights, energy justice, and the broader impacts of corporate activities on human rights and environmental sustainability. His PhD thesis examines how corporate and governmental actions affect the land rights of Indigenous communities and their access to energy resources. Nelson recently co-authored, with his supervisor, an article titled: 'Human Rights in the Context of Climate Change: Emerging Investment-related Responsibilities in Law and Policy.' He contributed to developing the module content for Corporate Sustainability and ESG Law at the University of Dundee and delivered teaching in the module and has also delivered lectures on corporate accountability for human rights, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the three dimensions of sustainability, impact investing and environmental sustainability, sustainable Investments and mandatory ESG regulations, and the increasing geopolitical polarisation of climate change action.

Dr Judith Oloo

Advocate of the High Court of Kenya and Lecturer at Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen – UK. Previously worked as Senior Lecturer and head of Public Law at Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) and as CEO of the East African Centre for Human Rights (EACHRights) - a regional human rights NGO with Observer Status at the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. Her research interest is in human rights generally, with a bias for vulnerable groups particularly women, children and other minorities. She has contributed to several discourses that have positively impacted the rights of minority groups at the African Committee on the Rights and Welfare of the child (ACERWC).

Dr Andras L. Pap

András L. Pap is Research Professor and Head of Department for Constitutional and Administrative Law at the HUN-REN Centre for Social Sciences, Hungarian Academy of Sciences Centre for Excellence, Institute for Legal Studies, as well as Professor of Law at the Faculty of Economics at Eötvös University (ELTE) in Budapest, and Adjunct (Recurrent Visiting) Professor in the Nationalism Studies Program at the Central European University (CEU) in Vienna. A former visiting scholar at New York University School of Law Global Law Program, and a SASPRO-Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow at the Institute of Sociology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava, his research interest include comparative constitutional law, human rights, law enforcement, and the conceptualization of race and ethnicity. He worked as rapporteur, consultant, senior expert, project manager and lead researcher in various projects commissioned by the European Union, the Council of Europe and the UN. He served as expert witness for courts in the UK and the US and habitually works with international NGO's and think tanks. He is a member of the Hungarian Helsinki Committee. In 2018 he founded the International Association of Constitutional Law (IACL) Research Group on identity, race and ethnicity in constitutional law. He is also a recurrent evaluator for a variety of EU grants. He has taught over 85 courses, delivered over 250 presentations and published over 100 articles and book chapters in international academic forums.

Prof. John Packer

John Packer is Neuberger-Jesin Professor of International Conflict Resolution in the Faculty of Law and Director of the Human Rights Research and Education Centre at the University of Ottawa. Over his academic career (Essex Law, Fletcher/Tufts, KSG/Harvard, Lauterpacht Centre/Cambridge), and 20 years as an intergovernmental official (UNHCR, ILO, OHCHR, UNDPPA, OSCE), Prof Packer has investigated and reported upon serious violations of human rights in several countries (notably Afghanistan, Burma/Myanmar, Iraq), contributed to the development and implementation of principal UN mechanisms and bodies, advised conflict actors in over fifty countries around the world notably in situations of intense inter-community disputes, and contributed to the development of international instruments and mechanisms to address, resolve, repair and prevent harms. From 1995 to 2004, he was Senior Legal Adviser then the first Director in the Office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities engaged throughout Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. In recent years, he has contributed to major reports on the genocides against the Rohingya, Uyghurs, Ukrainians, and Tigrayans and commented publicly on other situations including testimonies before a number of parliaments. He is Co-Director of the Voices in Exile project working with activists-in-exile in Canada and beyond.

If you have any questions, please email us at 'MIRP2025@stir.ac.uk'. Thank you!

Nerys Palmer

Nerys Palmer is a recent graduate of a Master's in Human Rights at the University of Oslo with a previous degree in Law from the University of Sussex. Nerys is a Native Welsh speaker, currently affiliated with the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights in research.

Dr Piergiuseppe Parisi

Piergiuseppe Parisi is a Lecturer at the York Law School and the Centre for Applied Human Rights (CAHR) at the University of York. Pier was the Principal Investigator of the Ritualising Protection Project, a collaborative research and impact project co-developed with the Nasa Indigenous territory of Huellas (Caloto, Colombia). He has several ongoing collaborations with the same community.

Dr Karolina Prażmowska-Marcinowska

PhD in international law, dissertation on Arctic Indigenous Peoples' cultural rights and climate change, assistant professor at the University of Silesia, author of several publications and principal investigator of a project concerning Inidgenous Peoples' rights.

Ruona Qi

Ruona Qi is a Doctoral Student at Duke Law School. They possess a PhD in Environmental Law from Wuhan University.

Dr Narissa Kashvi Ramsundar

Narissa is principal lecturer in international and comparative criminal law at Canterbury Christ University in the UK . She researches on impunity for international crimes and serious violations of human rights . She is a former Senior State Prosecutor from Trinidad and Tobago. She was also a visiting professional at the ICC from Oct 2020-April 2021.eir responsibilities under the Guiding Principle." This paper examines the extent to which suggested soft and hard regulatory recommendations from this group regarding the sale and distribution of arms on the continent can impact on enhanced protections for indigenous and minority groups on that continent. In so doing this paper will analyse the potential of these recommendation to stymie human rights violations against these groups by examining the impact of these recommendations on progressive realisation of ESCR and the link that has with prevention of mass atrocities.

Dr Elisa Ruozzi

Elisa Ruozzi is Associate Professor of International Law at the University of Turin (Italy) at the Department of Cultures, Politics and Societies. Her research interests comprise general international law, international environmental law, the law of the sea and the protection of human rights. She is a member of the Committee on Diplomatic and Consular Immunities of the International Law Association. Besides teaching activity abroad, she regularly teaches Public International Law and EU law. Her first monograph was devoted to the environmental jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights and the second to the application of human rights at sea.

Awring Shaways

Awring Shaways is the founder of KG Lobby Center, Shaways has been instrumental in raising awareness about the plight of the Kurdish people and advocating for their rights. Throughout her career, she has worked extensively with women organizations, specifically Kurdish women and refugees, showcasing her commitment to promoting gender equality and empowering women. Through her efforts, she helped amplify the voices of marginalized women and worked towards creating a more inclusive society.

Dr Soe Win

I consider myself both a scholar and an activist. I recently earned my Ph.D. in Global Gender and Sexuality Studies from the University at Buffalo, where my research focuses on human rights, including women's rights, minority rights, and LGBTQ rights, global gender inequality, and gender in politics. My dissertation examined the women's movement in Burma. Currently, I teach part-time in the Department of Women and Gender Studies at SUNY Brockport.

If you have any questions, please email us at 'MIRP2025@stir.ac.uk'. Thank you!

Session 1 Abstracts: Environment, Climate, Natural Resources and Indigenous Peoples

Ruona Qi *"Weathering Storms and Policies: the Vulnerable Voyage of Mongolian Herders Amidst Climate and Policy Shifts in China"*

Facing climate change, herders in Inner Mongolia are increasingly vulnerable due to their reliance on natural resources. Government policies limiting herders' movement further compound this vulnerability. Sedentarization has exposed herders to severer climate risks, necessitating them to acquire costly external resources in the face of extreme weather events. Furthermore, being excluded from environmental governance discourse and being portrayed in official narrative as culprits of ecological degradation, herders found their hands tied when they attempt to utilize traditional adaptive strategies. Such policies have profound socio-economic implications, reinforcing existing vulnerabilities and compromising the long-standing resilience of herding communities. This paper examines the relationship between climate change, policy decisions, and hierarchical institutional structures in the context of Inner Mongolia, China, focusing on Mongolian herders' vulnerabilities and adaptation. It analyzes how power dynamics within the state's discourse contribute to the formulation of policies that, while strong governmental interventions have benefitted Inner Mongolian herders in terms of financial and technological capacities. The paper also highlights that such power dynamics have simultaneously weakened social structures and traditional grazing practices. The paper also advocates for more inclusive and flexible pastureland policies that recognize and integrate herders' indigenous knowledge and adaptive strategies. Recent grassroots initiatives, like small-scale mobile pastoralism and mutual aid organizations, reflect the resilience and adaptive capacities of herder communities. The study emphasizes the need for a cooperative approach, where both state-driven and community-based solutions can coexist, to address the multifaceted challenges posed by climate change in Inner Mongolia.

Dr Austin Nwafor *"Environmental Rights in a quagmire: A critical review of Indigenous Rights and Plastics pollution"*

The global problem of plastic pollution is now one of the biggest human and environmental rights problems affecting all ecosystems, organisms, people, and the health of the entire planet. Because of its affordability and ubiquity, plastic is used everywhere and on a monumental scale. It is found plentifully in places as remote as the Arctic and on Mount Everest. Plastic pollution poses significant environmental and health risks and has decimated the human rights of indigenous and vulnerable communities in various ways without accountability, checks or balances. This is contrary to the position of the United Nations Human Rights Council which recognized the right to a healthy environment as a universal human right in 2021. This right is intended to catalyze change to create a just and sustainable future. Recently, international meetings of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) have taken place to negotiate and draft the Global Plastic Treaty. But so far, the meetings have featured a small number of Indigenous Peoples due to a lack of funding for their full and effective participation in the negotiation, even though this will be the most significant international environmental instrument since the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement. Paragraph 4 of the INC resolution provides that, when negotiating the instrument, the negotiators should consider the best available scientific evidence, including Indigenous and Traditional Knowledge, as well as the need for a financial mechanism to support the implementation of the instrument, including the option of a special multilateral fund. The original goal of the international agreement was to completely stop the use of disposable plastic products by 2040 and to use only non-toxic materials that will not release hazardous chemicals throughout their lifecycle. This would represent a huge loss for the oil corporations that produce plastic, and they are fighting back. This paper argues that plastic pollution has not been effectively governed by the extant international environmental rights instruments, especially as it relates to the precarious position of Indigenous communities. Using the socio-legal method and doctrinal approach, this paper examines the gap in the international legal instruments that protect the Indigenous people concerning their everyday experience of plastic degradation in their communities. The paper finds that plastic waste not only contributes to environmental degradation but is also a factor in climate change and a threat to Indigenous Peoples, their territories, waters, traditional lifestyles, health, and traditional knowledge. The main raw material for plastic production is oil, the extraction of which violates the rights of Indigenous Peoples and damages their territories and natural resources. The paper contends that the forthcoming Global Plastic Treaty can only be optimised if it is drafted against the backdrop of international human rights legal instruments which protect Indigenous people's rights.

Nelson Goodnews Ologhadien *"Energy Development and Indigenous Peoples' Land and Natural Resources Rights in Africa- The Case for Energy Justice"*

Africa is experiencing a surge in energy development projects, driven by the growing demand for energy, economic growth, and the global transition towards renewable energy sources. While these developments promise to address the continent's critical energy shortages and contribute to economic development, they also present significant challenges, particularly for African Indigenous Peoples whose lives are deeply intertwined with their ancestral lands and natural resources. Indigenous Peoples' rights to land and natural resources are recognised under various international legal frameworks. However, For Indigenous communities in Africa, the introduction of large-scale energy projects—whether fossil fuel development or renewable energy installations—on their lands and territories creates new dynamics that often exacerbate their existing marginalisation and undermine the realisation of their rights to land and natural resources. This paper explores the relationship between citing energy developments on or around Indigenous Peoples' lands and the realisation of Indigenous Peoples' rights to land and natural resources in Africa, highlighting the tensions that arise when pursuing energy goals intersect with African States' obligations to recognise the rights of Indigenous communities to land and natural resources. The chapter argues that energy development, whether in the form of conventional fossil fuel projects or renewable energy initiatives, frequently conflicts with Indigenous Peoples' land and natural resources rights and may lead to forced evictions, dispossession, environmental damage, and social disruption of Indigenous communities. By examining specific case studies, this paper will demonstrate how these developments undermine the ability of Indigenous Peoples to realise their rights to land and natural resources. Moreover, it will explore the utility of energy justice as a theoretical framework to guide law and policy to better align energy development with protecting Indigenous Peoples' rights to land and natural resources. Ultimately, the chapter argues that an energy justice approach respects and upholds the rights of African Indigenous Peoples to their land and natural resources while meeting the continent's energy needs.

Dr Edzia Carvalho and Dr Petya Dragneva "*Just Transition and (Non-)Human Rights"*

This paper explores the human and non-human rights dimension of a just transition. For the purposes of this paper, we do not engage with the concepts of justice and human rights, on which much has already been written, but focus on analysing human and non-human rights as they should and do emerge through the discourse of transition. We begin by investigating where the idea of rights fits into the concepts of change, transition, and transformation applicable to policy sectors beyond energy. The chapter then examines the contexts within which past transitions have occurred to highlight the different drivers of change in these contexts and the extent to which they reflect a concern for rights, both human and non-human. The next section delves deeper into the ongoing transitions that address the climate emergency as the modern driver of change and that requires a profound transformation from linear to circular paradigms across sectors. We explore the ways in which considerations of human and non-human rights are included in the normative literature on transitions in this context. Using existing literature exploring the lives of indigenous peoples, we question the policy solutions that tend to merge ecocentric and anthropocentric viewpoints and their prospects for carrying out transitions that need to be equally just for both humans and non-humans.

Dr Karolina Prażmowska-Marcinowska *"Indigenous Peoples' Right to Remedy in the Times of Climate Change: the Potential of International Human Rights Mechanisms"*

The paper, through the analysis of case-law of human rights courts and quasi-judicial bodies, will identify a number of challenges and limitations of the human rights-based approach to climate change litigation while also highlighting the Indigenous Peoples' possibilities of remedy in cases concerning violations of their rights as a result of climate change. The paper will begin with a discussion on the notion of accountability and the scope of the right to remedy in international law, with a special emphasis on Indigenous Peoples' needs, considering their reliance on culture and environment. As the effective realization of human rights implies that there must be mechanisms that can be used when the violation of human rights occurs, the potential of international mechanisms will be analyzed, both on the regional and universal level. Having regard to the post-colonial epistemology, the final part of the paper will answer the main research question: could Indigenous Peoples hold the States accountable for the current contribution to climate change through international human rights mechanisms?

If you have any questions, please email us at 'MIRP2025@stir.ac.uk'. Thank you!

Session 2 Abstracts: Indigenous People, Minority Groups and Domestic Protections

Dr Soe Win *"A Promised Land: Conflict Between the Burmese Military and the Karen Ethnic Armed Group"*

The Karen people are an ethnic minority in Burma. The name "Karen" was given to them by the British during their colonization of Burma. During World War II, the Karen ethnic group supported the British in driving out Japanese soldiers from Burma. The British regarded the Karen as loyal and obedient and promised them an independent state. However, when the British failed to fulfill this promise, the Karen established the Karen National Union (KNU), which continues to fight against the Burmese government to this day, making it one of the longest-running civil conflicts in the world. This paper will examine both the historical and contemporary issues facing the Karen ethnic minority. It will highlight the Karen's role during British colonization and their subsequent struggle with the Burmese military after independence. Furthermore, the paper will explore contemporary issues such as ethnic rights, the ongoing civil war, and the displacement of the Karen population into refugee camps in Thailand. Finally, it will shed light on the human rights violations committed by the Burmese military against the Karen people.

Haley Mason *"Rights at Risk: How Act C-92 Fails to Meet UNDRIP's Standards for Indigenous Child Welfare"*

The overrepresentation of Indigenous children in Canada's child welfare system is nothing short of a humanitarian crisis. While Indigenous children account for only 7.7% of Canada's child population, they represent a shocking 53.8% of those in foster care. This gross disparity echoes the dark legacy of residential schools and highlights Canada's failure to meet its international obligations under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). In 2019, Parliament introduced An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children, youth, and families (Act C-92) to address these issues by recognizing Indigenous jurisdiction over child welfare. Yet, findings reveal that Act C-92 falls woefully short of its promise to implement UNDRIP's standards for Indigenous self-determination, governance, and cultural continuity. Through doctrinal analysis of legal texts, policy frameworks, and case law, this paper identifies three major shortcomings of Act C-92. First, jurisdictional disputes between Indigenous, provincial, and federal governments limits the capacity of Indigenous communities to exercise full control over their child welfare systems. Second, Act C-92's vague language concerning the "Best Interest of the Child" fails to adequately safeguard cultural continuity. Third, the absence of guaranteed funding is a direct violation of UNDRIP Article 39, and deprives Indigenous communities of the necessary resources to implement Act C-92. While Act C-92 marks progress towards reconciliation, it is a far cry from the much needed transformational change. This paper recommends urgent and bold legal reform, including clear jurisdictional authority, guaranteed long-term funding, and strict accountability measures. These changes are essential to ensure that Indigenous children's rights are protected both in principle and practice. The time for action is now—before yet another generation of Indigenous children is lost.

Dr. Judith Oloo *"The African Human Rights Framework and the Nubis of Kenya: Minority Rights in peril?"*

Nubis are an ethnic minority group in Kenya consisting of over 100,000 people living in the 2.5 square-kilometers Kibera slum in Nairobi. Originally from Sudan, the community was forcefully conscripted by the British Colonialists in the early 1900s but were not returned home at the end of the war. A century and several generations later, Nubi's are yet to be recognized as Kenyans and are subjected to many rights restrictions. For instance, to obtain national Identity cards to be recognized as Kenyans, unlike other Kenyans, Nubis endure a complex vetting process including producing their grandparents' identity cards, swearing affidavits, paying 'administrative' costs and scrutiny of applications by a special committee. These constraints have made it impossible for many Nubis to obtain national ID cards and are thereby deprived of national identity and access to essential services. The foregoing suggests that Nubis have been treated differently due to their ethnicity. At the national level, several suits have been brought against the Kenyan Government to ventilate the rights of the Nubis. Despite judicial decisions in favour of the Nubis, successive Kenyan governments have failed to enforce these decisions. Consequently, the community had had to turn its attention to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights and its enforcement mechanisms for recourse. The piece evaluates the extent to which the attempt by the Nubis to safeguard their minority rights has been furthered by the African Human Rights mechanisms. More specifically, the impact of the African Committee and the African Commission in addressing the right to citizenship and identity of minority groups in Africa, especially the Nubis through its decisions in cases such as the Nubian Community in Kenya v. The Republic of Kenya-317/2006 and IHRDA and OSJI (on behalf of children of Nubian descent in Kenya) v Kenya. Premised on the theory that the impact of AU mechanisms' decisions can only be realized with implementation by member states, the paper also critically explores the challenges State Parties face- if any, in implementing decisions by the African Human Rights mechanisms. Among other recommendations, it proffers the strengthening of implementation mechanisms of AU mechanisms both domestically and regionally.

If you have any questions, please email us at 'MIRP2025@stir.ac.uk'. Thank you!

Lia O'Broin *"An Appraisal of the Scope and Implementation of Right of Indigenous Peoples to Maintain their Own Juridical Systems"*

While both international and state law have frequently been utilised for the oppression of Indigenous peoples, the past four decades have been marked by the increasing recognition of Indigenous peoples' rights in both international human rights law and as a result, in national legal systems. This paper specifically examines the nature and scope of the rights of Indigenous peoples to maintain their own juridical systems under international human rights law. This right includes the requirement that states allow and facilitate a degree of both normative and legal pluralism. This is of particular salience as state legal systems have often failed to be available to Indigenous peoples as a means of accessing justice and as a tool for empowerment. There is therefore also increasing recognition of the role Indigenous law may play in transitional contexts which is reflected in recommendations by numerous UN Treaty Bodies and Truth and Reconciliation Commissions. However, this right is routinely limited by the requirement that Indigenous law operate in accordance with 'national law and international human rights law.' Finally, the paper examines issues surrounding the politics of recognition and jurisdictional delineation which specific focus on the United States of American and the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

Dr Aristoteles Constantinides *"Self-identification of minorities and indigenous peoples in international human rights law"*

Self-identification is fundamental for minorities and indigenous peoples and is considered as the cornerstone of international law on minority protection. Yet it is a rather neglected topic in the literature and a highly sensitive one in some states that deny the existence of minorities in their territory. The paper makes a doctrinal analysis of international instruments, state practice and case-law on the self-identification of minorities and indigenous peoples and their members, aiming to disentangle the issue(s) and identify the state of the art. The paper distinguishes between self-identification of individual members and collective self-identification of the group because applicable principles are apparently distinct and have different legal consequences for the various actors involved (individuals, groups, states). The focus is on Europe where much of the relevant instruments and standards have been developed, particularly in the context of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and in the case law of the European Court of Human Rights. One of the questions to be discussed both in the paper and during the conference is the propriety of applying/extending such standards in other regions.

Dr Rahul Desarda *"Land, Identity, and Freedom: Reconciling Indigenous Rights in India with International Human Rights Norms"*

The Scheduled Tribes in India are indigenous communities recognized by the Constitution for their distinct cultural identities, traditional ways of life, and often socio-economically marginalized status, with specific legal protections intended to preserve their rights and support their development. Their land rights embody a complex mixture of constitutional guarantees, social identity, and economic autonomy. This dynamic, where the land serves not merely as a resource but as a locus of identity and freedom, presents a lens through which one can consider the broader imperatives of justice and equity in both national and global frameworks. Despite India's constitutional assurances and the enactment of the Forest Rights Act of 2006, the actualization of land rights for tribal communities remains precarious, as these rights are often subordinate to the demands of industrial development, urban expansion, and natural resource exploitation. The recurring displacement of these communities highlights a fundamental incongruity between the statutory recognition of rights and their practical observance. International human rights law, in turn, offers guiding principles—through instruments such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights — that affirm indigenous rights to land, culture, and self-determination. Here, however, we encounter the challenge of universality and context: how do we reconcile global principles with the unique socio-economic and cultural landscapes of particular communities? More pointedly, can the international standards, which emphasize rights to free, prior, and informed consent, be meaningfully integrated within India's complex legal and socio-political matrix, wherein multiple identities coexist, often in tension? This paper contends that a just approach to Scheduled Tribes' land rights requires more than mere legislative alignment; it demands a recognition of these rights as essential to the broader freedoms that enable communities to flourish. This paper will explore how a deeper commitment to substantive equality and genuine dialogue can bridge the gap between principle and practice. Case studies from India and analogous situations elsewhere reveal the necessity of adopting legal and policy frameworks that do not merely tolerate but actively support indigenous rights as integral to a democratic society's promise of justice. In doing so, we may better understand the implications of global human rights ideals for the real-world lives of India's Scheduled Tribes, ultimately fostering a vision of development that is both inclusive and respectful of cultural autonomy.

Session 4 Abstracts: Minority and Indigenous Rights: International Tribunals, Norms and Interpretations

Dr Elisa Ruozzi *"Justiciability of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: A Necessary Mean to Implement Indigenous Rights or an Excessive Widening of the Competence of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights?"*

One of the most recent and meaningful advancements of the case-law of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHR) relates to the justiciability of economic, social and cultural (ESC) rights and, notably, to the direct applicability of Article 26 of the American Convention on Human Rights. Under this latter provision, Member States "undertake to adopt measures […] with a view to achieving progressively, by legislation or other appropriate means, the full realization of the rights implicit in the economic, social, educational, scientific, and cultural standards set forth in the Charter of the Organization of American States". If direct justiciability of this category of rights has been established by the IACHR since 2017 (case Lagos del Campo v. Peru), in the cases Lhaka Honhat v. Argentina and Maya Kaqchikel Indigenous Peoples of Sumpango et al. v. Guatemala the issue has found specific application in the field of indigenous rights. In a nutshell, the Court's approach is in line with the idea of ESC rights being able to form a parameter of legality of States' conduct and therefore to generate obligations directly enforceable at the international level. Based on that, the IACHR directly applies Article 26 of the American Convention, thus drawing obligations and subjective rights – notably, the right of indigenous peoples to a healthy environment, to adequate food, to water and to cultural life – from this provision. As human rights oriented as such an approach may be, it is criticised by those who claim its incompatibility with the text of Article 26 of the Charter, as well as with the Protocol of San Salvador, whose Article 19 para. 6 clearly limits individual petitions to violations of trade unions rights and right to education. If this trend started in a perspective de iure condendo and of evolutionary interpretation of the provisions of the Convention, its consolidation imposes a reflection on the relevance that justiciability of ESC rights acquires in the context of indigenous rights. When compared to the rest of population residing in the State territory, indigenous peoples are characterised by the peculiarity of their lifestyle, that finds expression in their cultural life, in their relationship with the environment and in the specific modalities of enjoyment of ESC rights. At the same time, such rights are threatened by the vulnerability of indigenous populations to the point of impacting on their survival, as it results from the challenges they face in relation to access to water and to adequate food. In the light of these elements, the application of this category of rights cannot be entrusted to vague commitments and requires, also at the international level, well-defined obligations on States. At the same time, future developments will show the stability of this orientation, especially under the viewpoint of the implementation of the judgments of the Court, with a view to help the achievement of a decent standard of living be limited to a "legal maquillage".

Dr Colin Luoma *"The (Mis)treatment of Indigenous Peoples' Cultural Rights in the Context of Right to Life Claims"*

It is often repeated that the right to life is the most fundamental of all human rights. In recent years, it has evolved to include the right to enjoy one's life with dignity. The right to a dignified life is crystallizing through a series of decisions from supranational courts and treaty monitoring bodies which have broadly interpreted the right to life to include positive obligations on States to fulfill certain economic and social rights, such as the rights to food, water, housing, and healthcare. Despite the increasing breadth and flexibility afforded to the right to life, there is a seeming reluctance to treat cultural rights as necessary preconditions of a dignified life in the same manner as economic and social rights. This is the case even in the context of Indigenous groups whose cultural identities, practices and worldviews are inextricably intertwined with human dignity. This paper traces the evolution of the right to a dignified life, with a specific lens on how it has been interpreted in the context of cultural rights violations experienced by Indigenous Peoples. Drawing on decisions from the UN Human Rights Committee, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, it argues that there is a legal inconsistency between how economic and social rights, on one hand, and cultural rights, on the other, are treated in the context of claimed right to life violations. This treatment reinforces the subordinate position of culture and cultural rights in international human rights law and is antithetical to its endorsement of culture as a 'way of life'. It is also at odds with Indigenous Peoples' rights standard-setting, including the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Dr Andras L. Pap *"Conceptualizing and operationalizing indigeneity and national minorities: normative connections and avenues for institutional learning"*

The paper and the presentation provide a comparative overview of how law conceptualizes and operationalizes national minorities and Indigenous people, and how the two regulatory frameworks in constitutional and international law overlap and interact. Three questions are in the focus of the analysis: First, what is the fundamental logic and the underlying political map of political considerations for the two type of legal regimes? Second, what are the dominant instruments for recognizing members of these communities (and the subsequent rules for eligibility for the protection mechanisms), from among the five models of self-identification, community-identification, "objective" criteria; proxies; and outsider perception. The third question pertains to how conceptualization and operationalization is contested, both on the community-level (new groups seeking inclusion and recognition), as well in terms of group membership inclusion (including the phenomena of fraud, reverse-passing, ethno-corruption, etc.) The conclusion of the paper is that conceptualization and operationalization is intertwined and there should even be a normative relationship between the two, and that indigenous and national minority legal frameworks are interrelated, institutions can travel and there is room for institutional learning – in addition to synergic comparative scholarly knowledge production.

Prof. John Packer & Slava Balan *"To Become More Effective the Minority Rights Framework Requires Consolidation and Mainstreaming* John Packer has not yet registered."*

In 2023, the then UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues, Dr. Fernand de Varennes, submitted to the UN Human Rights Council a Proposal for a Draft Global Convention on the Rights of Minorities. Although this Proposal did not trigger (yet) a broad buy-in from the governments of UN Member States, this document warrants a close attention as the most recent and comprehensive attempt to consolidate the international minority rights protection framework. Our paper aims at discussing the key elements and novelties of the Special Rapporteur's Draft Proposal which would strengthen the international minority rights protection framework. For example, the proposed draft of the Convention provides for a deeper and more far-reaching conceptualization of discrimination against minorities (Article 13), for progressive autonomy and self-governance rights (Article 20), for advanced linguistic rights (Articles 34, 52, 55-59, and 63), etc. In addition, the draft Convention sets the framework for mainstreaming the minority perspective and dimension into the entire range of policies at all levels: global, national and local. In our paper we will argue that even if the Draft of the new Convention does not acquire a "hard" normative value through its adoption and ratification by UN Member States, the Convention still has a strong conceptual value – as the so far most elaborate document conceptualizing minority rights protection both comprehensively and holistically. As such, the Draft of the Convention proposes an integrated Human Rights-Based Approach to minority issues. Through our paper we will launch a call to governments, civil society and academia to adopt the conceptual framework offered by the Draft of the Convention as the mainframe for dealing with minority issues. Methodologically, in preparation of our paper we will analyze the entire range of UN documents concerning the protection of minorities, as well as specialized literature regarding the issues of minority rights framework consolidation and mainstreaming. We will also analyze the relevant texts from several other inter-governmental organizations, e.g. OSCE and Council of Europe, pertaining to the topic of minority rights consolidation and mainstreaming. Finally, for our analysis we will consult the reports and other materials of the international non-governmental organizations working on minority issues.

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Session 5 Abstracts: Indigenous Rights, and Self-Determination

Dr Maureen N. Eke *"Resisting Genocide and Mass Atrocities: Biafra and the Right to Self-Determination"*

Currently, Biafra land, specifically the Igbo-dominated areas, has been transformed into "conflict zone." A combination of agents of the Nigerian security forces, Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa as well as the Fulani herdsmen have engendered violence in the region, destroying communities, kidnapping residents, and forcing large populations into displacement. I argue that the ongoing destabilization of the region is a continuation of the genocidal war that ravaged Biafra (1967-1970). Nigeria's refusal to address the question of Biafra through transitional justice further complicates the current relationship between Biafrans and Nigerians. My presentation will focus on Biafrans' current struggle for self-determination, Nigeria's response to the call for self-determination, and the necessity for transitional justice.

Awring Shaways *"Kurdish Identity within the universal framework"*

This paper explores the citizenship, recognition, and identity issues faced by Iraqi Kurds, contextualizing them within the universal frameworks of human rights and self-determination. Despite constitutional recognition of their autonomy in Iraq, Kurds encounter significant barriers to citizenship, often facing bureaucratic obstacles that limit access to essential services and political representation. Historical injustices, including displacement due to conflict and repression, have further complicated their quest for legal status. The Kurds' aspiration for self-determination aligns with international norms articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. However, geopolitical considerations and regional dynamics frequently undermine these aspirations, reflecting a disconnect between universal principles and practical implementation. This paper argues for a comprehensive approach that advocates for the legal recognition of Kurdish rights, promotes cultural identity, and fosters inclusive governance, emphasizing the need for international support to bridge the gap between Kurdish aspirations and the global human rights framework.

Dr Lilia Arakelyan "*Choosing a Side in the Nagorno Karabakh Conflict: The Right to Kill or The Right to Self-Determination?"*

The dispute over Nagorno Karabakh, which involves complex issues of ethnicity, religion, sovereignty, self-determination, history, and borders, is the longest-running conflict in the post-Soviet space. The Armenian Azerbaijani hostility over Karabakh dates back to the end of World War I, and the formation of the USSR in 1922. The two states have fought multiple wars over the enclave, which was ethnically cleansed from the Armenian population in September of 2023. Using process tracing and historical explanation techniques, this study examines the conflict through the lens of Weber's monopoly of the legitimate use of force as the core of the modern state, and the principle of national self-determination codified in Article 1(2) of the United Nations Charter.

Dr Alessandro Bufalini "*Indigenous Peoples and the Majority/Minority Divide in International Treaty Making: Unpacking the Potential of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent"*

Indigenous peoples face significant challenges in making their voices heard during treaty-making processes. At the international level, representation is typically vested in state institutions, particularly the executive branch, a structure mirrored domestically where treaty-making authority rests with both executive and legislative branches. In this context, the right to self-determination holds considerable promise for strengthening indigenous political engagement in treaty-making, though it also presents specific challenges. Indeed, the internal dimension of self-determination—aimed at securing indigenous participation in national decision-making—may clash with certain democratic limitations. In other words, the democratic guarantees embedded within national processes may still fail to ensure indigenous voices are heard, as majorities can impose their views on minorities. Conversely, granting indigenous peoples veto power or an overly prominent role risks prioritizing their interests over those of broader society. This paper argues that the tension between the "dictatorship of the majority," where dominant societal groups marginalize indigenous voices, and the potential "dictatorship of the minority," where indigenous interests might unduly constrain national priorities, can be addressed through a thorough exploration of the free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) requirement. FPIC mandates that states establish effective consultation processes and make every effort to obtain indigenous consent. By fully embracing FPIC's core principles, this majority/minority tension can often be balanced, offering a sustainable path to resolve these conflicts of interest.

Session 6 Abstracts: Minority and Indigenous Rights: Language, Identity and Cultural Heritage

Nerys Palmer *"Preserving Indigenous Heritage: The Right to Effective Participation and Sámi Languages"*

Central to the right to self-determination, the right to effective participation and free, prior and informed consent are means through which Indigenous Peoples may exercise internal autonomy over matters concerning them. For the Sámi People in Norway, the Sámi Parliament acts as a representative institution in this authority, with an objective language requirement embedding Sámi languages into its functioning, interweaving with Sámi culture, identity, and traditional economic activities such as reindeer herding. The Norwegian State has adopted numerous human rights instruments in ensuring the realisation of Sámi rights; however, the extent of application may be contested, with legislative advancements not necessarily matching human rights commitments or Sámi rights-holders' expectations. Originally a Master's thesis, this paper addresses what is meant by 'effective' within the right to effective participation in this context, discussing the level of participation enjoyed by Sámi representatives in decision-making processes, with reflections through a critical race theory lens. This study follows 2024 amendments to Chapter three of the Sámi Act on Sámi languages, utilising interviews with Sámi rights-holders who are experts in these areas. Relating to the declining rate of Sámi languages, and Indigenous languages in general, this study is underscored by the International Decade on Indigenous Languages 2022-2032, and Norway's Action Plan for the Decade. Under the umbrella of these recent linguistic developments, this paper considers the extent to which Sámi People enjoy effective participation in determining language policy in Norway and whether recent measures adequately address the critical status of Sámi languages and Indigenous languages more generally.

Iva Divkovic *"Soft Erasure and the Boundaries of EU Intervention: TFEU's Role in Minority Rights Challenges"*

This paper explores the limitations on minority groups in the European Union (EU) to seek redress against the European Commission, highlighting the July 2024 ruling by the General Court of the European Union in Macedonian Club for Ethnic Tolerance in Bulgaria v Commission (Case T-156/24). The applicant, a Macedonian organisation, claimed that the European Commission failed to uphold its oversight obligations under Article 317 TFEU regarding Bulgaria's adherence to the right to freedom of assembly and association as guaranteed by Article 12 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. The Court dismissed the case, citing Articles 265 and 258 TFEU, which restrict individual or minority group claims against the EU's failure to act unless specific binding effects impact the applicants' legal standing directly. This decision illustrates that natural persons or minority groups cannot compel the Commission to initiate infringement proceedings under Article 258 TFEU, even where fundamental rights oversight may appear neglected. The ruling exemplifies and compounds what can be termed "soft erasure" within the EU framework, where procedural and jurisdictional constraints prevent minorities from holding EU institutions accountable, thus limiting substantive protections of minority rights at the supranational level. By dissecting the procedural barriers posed by Articles 265 and 258 TFEU and the Court's reliance on past rulings, this paper argues that the EU's legal mechanisms inadequately address the protective needs of minorities. It proposes a reassessment of Treaty provisions to ensure EU institutions adhere to their responsibilities under EU treaties, providing pathways for minority groups to challenge non-compliance effectively and foster genuine adherence to EU fundamental rights obligations.

Dr Deniz Arbet Nejbir *"Turkey's Kurdish language policy has been and continues to amount to linguistic genocide."*

This paper examines the treatment of the Kurdish language by the Turkish state, under both the Kemalist and Erdogan regimes from the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 until 2019.It investigates the Turkish state's Kurdish linguistic annihilation policy in depth, in the light of the International Criminal Law, International and European Human Rights and Minority Law. It argues that Turkey's policy of annihilating the Kurdish language (despite it being slightly eased during the AKP regime) has continued unabated since 1923, despite tremendous developments in international law from the world order of inter-war fascism to the present neo-liberal thinking and the change of both Turkish and Kurdish actors since then. The paper establishes, following scholars such as Skutnabb-Kangas and Hassanpour, that Turkey's Kurdish language policy has been and, despite recent reforms, continues to amount to linguistic genocide and violates Article 2(e) of the current Genocide Convention.

If you have any questions, please email us at 'MIRP2025@stir.ac.uk'. Thank you!

Dr Erika De Vivo *"Colonial Legacies and Indigenous Rights: Ethical Considerations on Ownership of Mantegazza's Late 19th Century Anthropometric Photographs of Sámi Peoples"*

The ownership rights concerning Indigenous heritage collected by foreigner agents and currently on display in western institutions present a complex legal and ethical dilemma. Much of this Indigenous heritage was collected during periods of colonization and imperialism, where power imbalances were significant. The consent to collect and display these items, if sought at all, was often not freely given by Indigenous communities but coerced or obtained under duress or misleading circumstances. This raises questions about the legitimacy of the initial acquisition and on conflicting rights (i.e. legal ownership vs. moral rights) and on the ethical responsibilities of institutions also considering the ongoing restitution debates concerning Indigenous heritages. In this framework, colonial photographs depicting Indigenous peoples deserve to be addressed as specific forms of Indigenous heritage that emerged from the interactions, often marked by violence, between Indigenous communities and colonial agents. While the copyright of many such photographs has expired, rendering them publicly accessible, this open access conflicts with the rights and dignity of the Indigenous subjects depicted. Often, these images were captured without genuine consent or under coercive conditions, where the subjects were unaware of how their likenesses would be used. At the moment though, no official guideline nor any binding legislation accounting for such perspectives regulates how such photographs should be handled. This situation calls for a re-evaluation of legal frameworks to align more closely with ethical considerations and Indigenous rights to cultural heritage. Addressing the case study examined in my project LIT (Locating Intergenerational Ties) as an initial point of reference, the paper addresses issues of self-determination and ownership rights in relation to how Indigenous cultural and historical heritage is managed, tackling identity and the traumas connected with past and current forms of epistemological and cultural oppression. LIT employs a decolonial approach, aiming to restore dignity and agency to the Sámi people by focusing on visual restitution and by expanding the existing historical narratives that are often dominated by colonial and male perspectives. This focus helps to highlight the specific impacts of colonial practices on vulnerable populations within indigenous communities, which is critical for understanding the full scope of rights violations and the necessary scope of redress.

Session 7 Abstracts: Indigenous Rights, Peace Agreements, and Post-Conflict Contexts

Dr Narissa Kashvi Ramsundar *"Protecting Indigenous and Minority Groups Rights in Asia through due diligence guidelines for the sale and distribution of arms"*

The UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights have embarked on a project to examine the practical steps that States and business enterprises should take to implement the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights in conflict and post-conflict contexts. One the key questions being addressed by the group, "What actions should be taken (and avoided) by actors in the financial sector—both public financial institutions and private investors—to meet their responsibilities under the Guiding Principle." This paper examines the extent to which suggested soft and hard regulatory recommendations from this group regarding the sale and distribution of arms on the continent can impact on enhanced protections for indigenous and minority groups on that continent. In so doing this paper will analyse the potential of these recommendation to stymie human rights violations against these groups by examining the impact of these recommendations on progressive realisation of ESCR and the link that has with prevention of mass atrocities.

Dr Piergiuseppe Parisi *"Rethinking the protection of Indigenous peoples in violent contexts: reflections around spiritual harm and security among the Nasa Indigenous people in Colombia"*

International human rights law (IHRL) and international humanitarian law (IHL) require States to protect (civilian) populations from 'serious harm, as a result of internal war, insurgency, repression or state failure'. This protective framework informs the notion of human security, and it applies to all (civilian) populations, including minorities and Indigenous peoples. However, protection agencies predominantly focus on the tangible dimension of security leaving the intangible – including spirituality – exposed to the destructive effects of violence, despite its importance in defining the identity of Indigenous peoples. A paradigmatic example of these dynamics is the case of the Nasa people of the Northern Cauca Department in Colombia. Caught in the midst of several interconnected armed conflicts, the Nasa people have seen their spiritual elders and traditional medics assassinated, their sacred places violated or even destroyed, their access to traditional medicinal plants curtailed, their youth co-opted into armed groups or illegal economies, etc. While these harms manifest physically, they also possess an intangible, spiritual dimension in that they weaken the social, cultural and spiritual fabric that characterises the Nasa people. Indeed, they would argue that the latter dimension is the most serious in that it threatens their very existence as Nasa people. Based on insights from collaborative research conducted in Colombia with the Nasa community of Huellas, Caloto, this paper critically examines the intersecting frameworks of IHRL and IHL to identify avenues for recognising and addressing spiritual harm. Furthermore, it suggests a broader understanding of human security that encompasses spiritual security, highlighting the need for a more holistic approach to the protection of Indigenous peoples.

Session 8 Abstracts: Minority and Indigenous Rights in the Modern Technological Era

Dr Roberta Medda-Windischer and Dr Katharina Crepaz *"Reframing Minority Rights Amid Global Challenges: The Role of AI and Algorithmic Fairness in Promoting Diversity and Inclusion"*

Since the beginning of the 21st century, the previously favorable stance towards minority rights, regarded as fundamental components of democratic societies, has begun to show signs of fatigue, if not outright resistance, leading to the erosion of established minority rights standards. As a result, minority rights have increasingly lost prominence on political agendas, overshadowed by other global challenges, including the disruptions caused by climate change, rising global economic inequalities, health crises, increased international mobility, international conflicts, and technological advancements, particularly in media and artificial intelligence. Aiming to revitalize the field of minority rights research and reframe the minority rights paradigm, this presentation explores the increasing significance of AI systems across various domains of human life, particularly in relation to minorities and the accommodation of their needs and claims. It also addresses emerging concerns about these technologies potentially exhibiting biased or discriminatory behavior, especially in contexts where multiple dimensions of diversity intersect. Using Kimberlé Crenshaw's (1989) concept of intersectionality as our main framework and adding perspectives from current legal and social science discourses, we argue that discriminatory AI is a human-made problem and can therefore only be tackled through a human centred approach. This approach includes discussing protected attributes and their (in)stability, vulnerability and essentialist vs. non-essentialist attribution of group identity, as well as focusing on human-made inequalities and power imbalances as the source for biased AI systems. AI models are biased and discriminatory because our society structures are as well; solutions only addressing technological challenges therefore fall short of tackling the underlying issue of inequalities. We analyse the EU AI Act and the European Centre for Algorithmic Transparency as possible strategies for mitigating discriminatory effects through AI governance and conclude that successfully creating fair AI will not be possible without addressing the societal roots of its discriminatory behaviour.

Sahil Asiwal *"The Challenges of Preserving Traditional Knowledge in the Modern World"*

From ancient times to the 21st century, the world has rapidly evolved; however, maintaining and preserving traditional knowledge remains a struggle in the current period. Only Indigenous people keep a connection to their roots and ensure sustainability, enabling them to transfer their traditional wisdom from generation to generation. Indigenous people have confronted several problems maintaining their traditional knowledge and the environment. However, a lack of interest from firms, individuals, and government organizations has left them with little hope. This study will concentrate on designing strategies and establishing legal frameworks to maintain and conserve the traditional knowledge that future generations can inherit, safeguarding the natural environment and its resources. Adopting new patterns and technologies to protect the traditional knowledge of indigenous people will fulfill sustainable development goals. The government will also benefit from the assistance of the Indigenous people, who have deep ties to the environment and possess a deep understanding of protecting the planet through their traditional knowledge and practices. By addressing the conventional wisdom of the indigenous people and the influence of their knowledge and training in the contemporary day, which is focused on defending and preserving their rights, we will bring about significant improvements in the environmental field. Traditional knowledge is only the practice that can conserve and maintain sustainability, and it is the job of every single individual to promote conventional knowledge practices worldwide.

Theshaya Naidoo "*A Critical Assessment of Integrating Indigenous Solutions and Digital Technologies for Environmental Sustainability in Impoverished Regions."*

This paper critically examines the advantages and potential impediments to the integration of indigenous solutions and digital technologies for environmental sustainability within impoverished regions. Due to the accelerating pressure of climate change and environmental degradation disproportionately impacting these communities, there is an established necessity for innovative solutions that reflect indigenous knowledge systems and operate within resource constraints. This research extends beyond conventional dichotomies, as it aims to explore the synergies and opportunity arising from this integration. Indigenous practices in agroforestry, water management, and biodiversity conservation could be enhanced by data analysis, remote sensing, and communication tools offered by digital technologies. Therefore, this analysis considers the barriers and complexities of such integration, by addressing issues of affordability, accessibility, knowledge disparity, and potential power imbalances, specifically in the context of impoverished regions. Through a critical examination of the socio-economic, cultural, and technological obstacles that hinder successful integration of indigenous solutions and digital technologies such as issues of accessibility, affordability, and knowledge disparity, and through the consideration of contextual relevance and effectiveness of digital interventions in impoverished regions, where the impact of climate change is acutely felt, this research aims to identify areas where indigenous solutions and digital technologies can complement and enhance each other, leading to more efficient and effective environmental interventions. The primary purpose of this research is to provide a more nuanced understanding of the complex interplay between indigenous knowledge, digital technologies, and environmental sustainability in impoverished regions by offering practical and actionable recommendations policymakers, development practitioners, and technologists that promote equitable and sustainable solutions and reflects local wisdom and empowered by technological advancements.

TRAVEL, ACCOMODATION& PARKING INFORMATION

Getting to Stirling

By air

The most convenient airport to fly into is Edinburgh, followed by Glasgow, which both have branches of car hire operators and taxi services.

Edinburgh Airport – a 24 hour bus service, every 10 mins at peak times and 30 mins at night, leaves outside the terminal and stops at Haymarket Terrace for direct rail and bus services to Stirling. Journey time – 20 mins. From the airport you can also take the 909 coach directly to the university campus.

Glasgow Airport – a quarter hourly bus service taking around 25 mins leaves from outside the terminal and stops at Buchanan Street Bus Station for direct services to Stirling. Queen Street Railway Station is a five minute walk.

By rail

Stirling is about 35 minutes from Glasgow (Queen Street Station) and 50 minutes Edinburgh (Haymarket and Waverley stations) with three direct services an hour from Glasgow and two from Edinburgh. The Railway station is located 2 minutes walk from the city centre.

For timetables go to travelinescotland.com

By coach

Stirling is well connected by Scotland's coach network and Stirling's bus station is next to the train station.

You can check timetables on the Citylink website and find out more about Edinburgh Airport Bus Connections.

Getting to campus

By bus

The Unilink shuttle bus between Stirling centre, the train station and the main University campus is one of the handiest and most regular services.

Most bus services to the campus run from either just outside Stirling's Rail Station or a two-minute walk away, in Murray Place.

Visit the Midland Bluebird website for the most up-to-date timetable information.

By car

From the East, South or West, take the M9 to Junction 11. At the junction, there is a roundabout which marks the end of the M9. From here you should take the exit for Bridge of Allan, follow the road through the town itself, and after about 200 metres you will find the University entrance on the left.

From the North take the A9 to the same roundabout and follow the same route through

You can also pre-book a taxi in advance with Stirling Taxis.

Accommodation

You can make your room reservation for the official conference hotel, Stirling Court Hotel, University of Stirling. Please reserve your room as soon as possible to guarantee your reservation at the official meeting hotel, and use the code 305494 for an exclusive discount. Rooms go quickly at this venue due to other conferences that will be taking place within the same period. We encourage you to make your reservation as soon as you can.

Free parking is provided with the room reservation, your car must be registered upon arrival with reception. For any accessibility needs please email 'MIRP2025@stir.ac.uk'.

If you have any questions, please email us at 'MIRP2025@stir.ac.uk'. Thank you!